

26 September 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Second Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends United
Against Human Trafficking**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me express my gratitude to the Group of Friends United Against Human Trafficking for inviting me to address this second Ministerial Meeting.

I am proud to be one of the Group's original members, and am here today to let you know that as President of the General Assembly you can count on my continued support.

Let me also take this opportunity to commend the Group of Friends for the important Declaration on the Global Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons that will be adopted in this ministerial meeting.

Human trafficking is a global problem. It ranks as the world's third most profitable crime after illicit drug and arms trafficking. Only one out of one hundred victims is ever rescued. No country is unaffected. We must do better.

In the 2005 World Summit outcome document, Member States expressed grave concern about the negative effects on development, peace and security, and human rights posed by trafficking of human beings, as well as the increasing vulnerability of States to this crime.

Member States recognized that trafficking in persons continues to pose a serious challenge to humanity and requires a concerted international response.

Human trafficking also impacts our ability to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals, particularly MDG 8 to "Develop a global partnership for development". The root causes of child trafficking lie in under-development.

A global partnership aimed at fostering good governance, debt relief and official development assistance can contribute to reducing poverty and corruption, limiting the supply and demand for trafficking.

Cross-border and international cooperation are necessary to monitor and stop child trafficking.

In 2010, the Group of Friends turned the concerns of Member States into concrete action by negotiating and passing by consensus a comprehensive UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. A Trust Fund for Victims was established by the General Assembly, and I am pleased to see that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has already begun to establish a small grants facility to start distributing funds to victims.

In 2012, UNODC will publish its biennial global report on trafficking in persons from UNODC, thanks to the efforts of the Group of Friends.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Although human trafficking takes place in the dark margins of our societies, we must not ignore its presence. All nations must work together to end this assault on human dignity.

We must prosecute and punish the criminals involved and protect and reintegrate the victims into their communities. We must spur governments and all members of society into action to reduce the vulnerability of victims, and increase the consequences for traffickers.

Sixty three years ago, the General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In doing so they proclaimed that all humans are born free, that no one shall be held in slavery or servitude, and that slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Yet today, millions of people, the majority of them children and women, are victims of human trafficking.

May we redouble our efforts to ensure that our concrete and concerted action upholds the rights and freedoms for all.

I wish you continued success in your important endeavors.

Thank you.